



**Executive Office of the Mayor
Vaughn D. Spencer**

To: Reading City Council
From: Mayor Vaughn D Spencer
Date: January 22, 2014
Subject: Water Bid Process

On January 13 I presented a memo to council asking them to join the Administration in a comprehensive and objective assessment of available options to deal with the 2015 fiscal cliff.

In that memo: I listed six potential options to avoid the fiscal cliff; suggested four simple ground rules to govern the discussions between council and the Administration; recommended the use of a facilitator to ensure open communications; and posed sixteen questions to help frame the discussions.

To date I have not received any feedback other than a media report suggesting council would convene to consider my recommendations within 30 days [from January 14].

Our time frame to complete the open bid process is very short and is determined by the 2015 budget submission date, September 30, 2014. We therefore have eight months to complete the bid process or face a highly unstable financial situation going into 2015.

For this reason, even though council has not formally replied to my memo of January 13, I have directed my staff to prepare a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to be issued in early February.

An RFQ is the standard means by which prospective bidders are asked to confirm their interest and capacity to submit bids following the issuance of the Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFQ, unlike the RFP, **will not define** the city's objectives or otherwise skew the process toward any specific bidder or outcome.

Any comments or input you may have related to the RFQ should be provided within the next two weeks in order to be considered in preparation of the RFQ.

Attached to this memo is a DRAFT Tentative Timeline outlining the sequence and timing of each step necessary to complete the bid process. Based on our research and conversations with experienced professionals in the field, this timeline is realistic ***but there is absolutely no room for delay.***

According to the Timeline, the RFP will be issued in early March. As mentioned earlier, the RFP will lay out our objectives and, in doing so, may well influence the selection of the successful bidder and the outcome.

Comment and input for consideration in preparation of the RFP should be submitted by the first week of March.

To assist council and the administration in identifying priorities and objectives, I am suggesting that we conduct an opinion survey along the lines of the attached document, **FACTORS TO CONSIDER**. This document is merely a suggestion and is open to whatever revisions council feels are needed.

The survey and the tentative timeline attached, together with the elements of my January 13 memo, are all meant to keep council fully informed and afford every opportunity to participate in the process.

Please keep in mind however, that the level and frequency of input which council may desire in the open bid process is entirely up to council and it must occur within the established timeline.

Finally, I ask that you please consider and reply to the four bullet point guidelines in my January 13 memo. For your convenience, these guidelines were:

- A member of council shall be present at every meeting with the Administration.
- Any substantive or procedural decision which has the potential to materially impact the process or outcome shall have demonstrable support from a majority of council.
- Each individual member of council shall be notified whenever council is requested or required to make a decision which may have material impact.
- Neither city council, its individual members, council staff, the Mayor or any representative of the Administration shall comment publicly on any aspect of the process without providing 24 hours advance, written notice to the counterpart.

(As clarification, I propose the 4th bullet point become effective when full agreement on the process is reached.)

I look forward to hearing from you individually or as a group in the very near future. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.